



Montana Board of Crime Control
5 S Last Chance Gulch
PO Box 201408
Helena MT 59620
Phone (406)444-3604
Fax (406)444-4722
TTY (406)444-7099
www.mbcc.mt.gov

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Commissioner
Chairperson

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Dawson County Attorney

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Attorney

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Derek VanLuchene
Public Representative

TO: Chair Diane Sands, Law and Justice Interim Committee

FROM: Natalia Bowser, Bureau Chief, Crime Control Bureau

DATE: September 11, 2018

RE: Restorative Justice report per MCA 2-15-2013

The Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) is directed to actively seek federal grant money to establish restorative justice programs. The Board must produce and report to the Law and Justice Interim Committee, a biennial report summarizing how any awarded grant money was spent and program data and information reported by grant recipients. The purpose of this report is to fulfill the requirements of MCA 2-15-2013.

2-15-2013. Restorative justice grants.

- (1) The purposes of the restorative justice grant programs are to:
- (a) promote the use of restorative justice practices throughout the state; and
 - (b) provide technical assistance to local and state jurisdictions and organizations interested in implementing the principles of restorative justice.

Restorative justice is a theory that focuses on repairing the damage caused by criminal behavior through programs focused on transforming people and communities. This practice includes all stakeholders to strengthen relationships and provide positive alternatives for intervention to avoid the criminal justice system.

In support of the MBCC, the Department of Corrections' Crime Control Bureau seeks grant funding under competitive grant solicitations to support restorative justice initiatives and qualified, evidence-based programs.

The Center for Restorative Youth Justice (CRYJ)

Funded through a Title II grant, MBCC allocates \$43,000 to CRYJ in the Flathead Valley. CRYJ provides proactive support for at-risk youth to avoid contact with the juvenile justice system. The program enhances communication between victims, youth offenders, and community members and helps individuals take responsibility for their actions and set goals.

Achievements include:

- Implemented a restorative integration program for youth struggling with school connections, escalating behavior problems and/or chronic absenteeism.

- Provided training in restorative practices and integration of on-campus discipline for campus staff.
- Reduced suspensions, expulsions, and contact with the criminal justice system for minor school-based offenses.
- Expanded to Flathead High School and Linderman Education Center in 2017. Five students have developed restorative agreements between each student and the school and were diverted from the criminal justice system.
- Facilitated a five-day “Restorative Practices in the Classroom” course for teachers during a 2018 summer teacher academy at the Flathead Valley Community College.

Butte-Silver Bow Family Drug Court

The MBCC allocated nearly \$68,000 in Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) funds to the Butte-Silver Bow Health Department. The program provides substance use disorder treatment to incarcerated individuals who have lost custody or are at risk of losing custody of their children to the Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division. Individuals typically participate in the Butte-Silver Bow Family Drug Court after release from jail. As part of the continuum of restorative justice, the program aims to reunify families and prevent future crime.

Girls Using Their Strengths (GUTS)

Funded through a Title II grant, the MBCC allocated \$25,000 to the GUTS program at the YWCA in Missoula which serves more than 200 young women annually. GUTS is a community-based leadership program to empower young women aged nine through eighteen by building confidence and strength. The program provides a supportive and healthy environment, uses culturally sensitive Talking Circles to help participants address community issues and develop resiliency skills, and focuses on identity formation.